

Maintenance Closet Checklist

Everyday you use chemicals at school and on school grounds. Not all chemicals are serious health threats, but some are. Good health is important to our families, the students in our schools and to us. Therefore, you and your co-workers need to know what dangers are associated with the chemicals you use.

The primary focus of this checklist is to protect students and employee health by enabling schools to store products effectively and minimize health and the environment. Even more so than adults, children can be vulnerable to, and may be severely affected by, exposure to chemicals, hazardous wastes, and other environmental hazards. Children, teachers and other employees spend a significant part of their lives in school buildings, which may contain harmful chemicals including cleaning and other maintenance products.

This checklist is designed in such a manner that a negative answer to any question indicates an area of safety concern.

- ☐ Are the chemicals stored in a separate room away from the other areas of the school?
- ☐ Is the area where chemicals are stored a locked and ventilated area?
- ☐ Where chemicals are stored, are aisles and passageways in good repair, kept clear and properly marked?
- ☐ Are chemicals properly stacked, blocked or secured when stored?
- ☐ Are chemicals labeled properly? Labels should include the proper name of the chemical, name and address of the manufacturer, date received, emergency information and hazard markings.
- ☐ Are chemicals stored properly? Do not store incompatible chemicals near one another and do not use them on the same surface or pour them down the drain. Information about incompatibility is available on the material safety data sheet (MSDSs). The most common example of what not to store near one another is bleach and ammonia; when mixed, they create poisonous chloramine gas.
- ☐ Are MSDSs current, accurate and available on all hazardous materials and cleaning chemicals? This includes everyday products such as window or glass cleaner and other classroom cleaners.
- ☐ Is a chemical management program, list of chemicals, MSDS and labeling information made available or posted in the maintenance closet at all times?
- ☐ Is good inventory control practiced? Stock should be rotated and products should be used before they expire. Good inventory control means not buying more than you need.
- ☐ Are acids and other corrosive products stored in secondary plastic containers? Has the use of aerosols been eliminated?
- ☐ Is mop water emptied daily? Chemical fumes from dirty mop water can linger in your closet. Empty mop water immediately after use and hang mops upside down, over drains to dry.
- ☐ Are chemical lids secured tightly? Before storing a chemical, check to see that the lid is on tightly. If a chemical has a child-resistant lid, make sure it is on properly.

Maintenance Closet Checklist*(Continued from front)*

- ☐ Are all chemicals stored away from heat and/or water? Exposure to heat or water can cause reactions with chemicals.
- ☐ Are chemicals being disposed of properly? For information about disposing chemicals, call the Indiana Department of Environmental Management's Hazardous Waste Management staff at **(317) 232-3292**. You can also call your local household hazardous waste center or solid waste management district for help. Never pour chemicals down the drain.
- ☐ Is poison prevention practiced? All chemicals should be stored out of sight, preferably in a locked cabinet or away from students. Chemicals should be properly labeled, in original containers and away from food.
- ☐ Are the chemicals used the least hazardous products available? Minimize exposure to students and staff by purchasing "green" cleaning products and least toxic pesticides. Mix only the amount of pesticide needed for immediate application. Do not use chemicals labeled DANGER. Never use chemicals or pesticides when students are present.

If you have a poison emergency or for further information, call the National Poison Center Hotline **(800) 222-1222**.

Report Spills. All chemical spills, which threaten public water supply, need to be reported to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management Spill Line, as legally required by the Indiana Spill Rule. For a chemical spill of any size, call the IDEM Emergency Response line at **(888) 233-7745**. If you are in doubt as to whether or not a spill needs to be reported, call the Emergency Response line. It is better to be advised your spill is not reportable than to be in violation. For more emergency response information, visit the IDEM Web site, at **www.IN.gov/idem/programs/land/er/**.

For more information about better chemical management practices, consult the Chemical Management CD in your Green Steps Tool Kit or the Chemical Management section of your Green Steps Guide Book.